

SB 658 (Kuehl)

Bay and Coastal Motor Vehicle Mitigation Program

The Problem

The increase in motor vehicles and their related infrastructure in California's coastal and San Francisco Bay Area counties is outstripping the ability of state and local governments to address the effects on the environment. Counties on the coast of California and the SF Bay Area contain 77% of the state's population. In the US, the number of miles driven annually over the past 20 years has increased at four times the rate of population growth, with a corresponding increase in infrastructure – roads, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces; culverts, bridges, and other structures at stream crossings, abutments, rip rap, and other means of bank stabilization. These all result in a variety of effects on environmental values: habitat fragmentation; pollution of streams and water courses; loss of coastal beaches due to changes in sediment flow patterns; interference with public access to and along the coast, coastal rivers, and upland areas; health impacts to people, fish and wildlife; and increased potential for conversion of lands from valuable agriculture, floodplain, habitat, and watersheds to other uses.

The Bill

SB 658 makes available a coordinated local funding option for addressing a range of environmental problems resulting from motor vehicles and their associated infrastructure in coastal and bay counties. SB 658 authorizes the Coastal Environment Motor Vehicle Mitigation Program, administered by both the state and participating counties, which would enable counties to opt into a dedicated funding source to support appropriate projects.

- **Coastal and SF Bay Area counties.** The 20 counties adjacent to the coast and San Francisco Bay would be eligible to participate in county-wide projects.
- **Opt in.** The fee would be collected only in counties where the Board of Supervisors votes to participate in the program.
- **Fee.** The fund would derive revenues from a motor vehicle registration fee of up to \$6 per year.
- **Proportionate benefit and audit.** The benefits of projects funded by the program for each county would be required to be in proportion to the funds derived from each county, and a biannual audit is required.
- **State-Local Partnership.** 30% of the funds would be administered by participating counties; 70% of the funds would be administered by the State Coastal Conservancy, which has existing authority for these purposes.
- **Mitigate Transportation Impacts Only.** Funds could only be used for projects that reduce, prevent and remediate the adverse environmental impacts of motor vehicles and their associated infrastructure.
- **Projects and Priorities.** Projects could include those that protect or restore habitat, protect water quality, address sediment management and beaches, public access, or preventing pollution, with priority given to those projects that provide long-term protection and restoration of, or long term reduction in the level of effects on natural resources impacted by motor vehicles and related infrastructure.
- **Funding.** If all 20 counties opt in at \$6 per registration, approximately \$112 million would be raised.
- **Sunset.** The program would be established in 2006, but it would take approximately two years for project funding to be available. The program sunsets in 2020, making the funding source available for 12 years.